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C O N F I D E N T I A L PARIS 001763

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DEPT FOR EUR/RPM

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TAGS: [PREL](#) [KCFE](#) [PARM](#) [NATO](#) [RS](#) [FR](#)

SUBJECT: CFE AND PUTIN'S APRIL 26 REMARKS - RUSSIANS STATE  
THE MESSAGE WAS "POLITICAL" AND DESIGNED TO CONVEY RUSSIAN  
UNHAPPINESS WITH LACK OF ADAPTED TREATY

REF: A) STATE 57275 B) PARIS 1723

Classified By: Political Minister-Counselor Josiah Rosenblatt, Reason 1  
.4 B/D

¶1. (C) In a May 2 follow-up conversation with Arnaud Roux, MFA action officer responsible for CFE (ref B), Roux provided us with a readout of his May 2 conversation with Russian Embassy representatives. According to Roux, the Russian representative emphasized that Putin's April 26 message was designed to send a "political" message to Allies, and would have no immediate consequences at the "technical level." Specifically, Putin was dramatizing Russian disappointment with the "absence of a ratified Adapted CFE treaty, i.e., its non-entry into force."

¶2. (C) The Russians made four points, Roux noted:

-- The U.S. and NATO had provided insufficient information about the "base buildup" in Romania and Bulgaria. Moscow does not believe that the U.S. has ever provided a precise definition of "substantial forces," in accordance with what it believes to be the commitments contained in the NATO-Russia Founding Act.

-- The reason Moscow wants the Adapted CFE treaty to enter into force is to make up for the fact that the "Eastern group" no longer exists, its members having mostly joined the NATO Alliance. An additional problem is that the Baltics are not party to any treaty, that is, they have not signed or do not belong to any disarmament treaty, according to the Russians.

-- NATO did not and has not provided a "precise definition" of the Istanbul Commitments. Moscow, accordingly wants more debate at the NATO-Russia Council.

-- Lastly, Moscow is not making a link between CFE and Missile Defense. The only linkage, according to the Russians, is with the absence of a ratified treaty. According to Roux, the intent is for Missile Defense decisions to be viewed as a "trigger" for the CFE.

¶3. (C) Roux said the French reaction was to register "incomprehension" at the Russian position and to question why Russia/Putin was taking such a stand at this time. Additionally, given the "progress" being made at the NATO-Russia Council, there was no justification for Putin's actions. Lastly, Roux said France warned the Russians not to put at risk the existing security architecture of Europe, specifically Open Skies, CSBMs and CFE, which also represent an opportunity for European dialogue with Russia on security.

14. (C) In response to our queries, Roux said that unfortunately the Russians offered no solutions or a suggested way forward. The MFA responded by urging the Russians to maintain the dialogue at the NATO-Russia Council. In terms of the French approach, he said France shares the U.S. view that Allies need to maintain unity, as well as pressure on Russia to implement the Istanbul Commitments. Lastly, Roux observed that the Russian arguments presented did not track fully with the message Putin delivered in his April 26 message, which only adds to the confusion over Russian objectives.

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